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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 006028

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: TURKEY'S U/S ZIYAL ON GC/TRIBES VISITS,
"KURDISH CORPS," PROMOTING TURKMEN, AND NEED FOR SECOND
BORDER GATE

REF: A. ANKARA 6027

[B](#). ANKARA 5930

[C](#). ANKARA 5680

[D](#). ANKARA 5553

Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman. Reasons 1.5 B and D.
ACTION REQUEST at para 4.

Summary

[1](#). (C) On Sept. 23, Turkish MFA Undersecretary Ziyal and Ambassador discussed a range of Iraq issues. Ziyal said Iraqi tribes and the visiting Governing Council delegation told the Turks they did not want more foreign troops in Iraq. However, if Turkey sent troops, the Turks should be distinct from US forces with a clearly different mission. Ziyal also reported hearing that a "Kurdish Corps" of 19,000 peshmerga with heavy weapons was being set up on Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran, a development Ziyal said would lay the basis for Kurdish secession in Iraq. (We request clarification on this issue - see para 4). He complained about the KDP's "arbitrary" attitude about operations on the Iraqi side of the Habur gate. Ziyal noted that the Habur border crossing had reached its capacity, and urged the US and Turkey to begin talks on a second border crossing. Pointing to the new Iraqi Turkmen Front leadership, Ziyal stressed Iraq's Turkmen have a contribution to make and need help from the CPA and the Iraqi Kurds to make it. End Summary.

Tribes and GC Say No Foreign Troops

[2](#). (C) MFA Undersecretary Ugur Ziyal and the Ambassador discussed Iraq issues Sept. 23. Ziyal said the Iraqi tribes told the Turks that if Turkey sent troops to Iraq, they should be distinct from US forces and the Iraqi people should know the Turks had a different mission. But basically, Ziyal said, the Iraqis do not want foreign troops. These themes were repeated to the Turks by Ahmed Chalabi and the Governing Council (GC) that visited mid-Sept. Ziyal said that despite this and the GC delegation's reluctance to welcome a Turkish contribution, Turkey continued to believe an invitation from the GC important.

Turkey Wants Agreement w/US on Timeline, Future of Iraq

[3](#). (C) If Turkey is going to send troops, Ziyal told the Ambassador, Turkey and the US must agree in advance on the broader political objectives: What kind of Iraq are the troops there to protect? What is the timeframe for the troop presence and for setting up sovereignty? What is the exit strategy? He added that there must be agreement on the Turkish area of responsibility, and on lines of communication (LOC). Implying the need for a LOC running through northern Iraq, Ziyal said that a LOC through Syria would be impossible. Ziyal reported that all Iraqis mention the importance of a rapid transfer of sovereignty, and that Turkey understands that there is a process involved. The constitutional process in particular, must go smoothly, he said. Ziyal then warned that he heard elections might be conducted based on presentation of ration cards. He cautioned that could be counterproductive, as cards may have changed hands/been bought or traded in the market place.

Rumor of a 19,000 Strong Kurdish Corps

[4](#). (C) Ziyal told the Ambassador he had heard that a "Kurdish

Corps" of 19,000 Iraqi Kurds with heavy weapons was being set up on Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran. Such a development, he worried, would establish the basis "for the Kurds to go their own way. And they've made no secret that is what they want to do, although they say the time is not right yet." ACTION REQUEST: Please provide information we can share with the GOT on use of any sizable numbers of Kurdish troops on the borders, whether as border guards, elements of the new Iraqi army or other. It will help us to be able to tell Ziyal whether there are concentrations of Kurdish troops on the border, and if so, in what capacity and under whose command.

Habur at Capacity - Need Second Gate

15. (C) Ziyal told the Ambassador that the Habur Gate has reached its capacity, that it will soon be renovated, and that renovation will decrease capacity at the crossing for a number of months. The demand for capacity will increase, and considerably if Turkish troops deploy to Iraq. Therefore, Ziyal said, it was time to begin discussions about a second border gate. He said Turkey would like to start talks now. To open a new gate, 30 kilometers of new road, a bridge and housing for customs/border employees will need to be constructed. The Ambassador replied that it would be useful to begin discussions about a second gate, but first we needed CPA coordination of the issue with the Iraqis to ensure they could meet the needs of establishing a second gate. Ziyal said he hoped CPA would not be coordinating with the same Iraqis (i.e., the KDP) that have an interest in blocking the project or collecting illegitimate fees, and that it would be best if the matter were worked directly with the Iraqi MOI. The Ambassador told Ziyal that we needed to work together on both sides of the border to speed the inspection process. (COMMENT: This might provide an opening to pursue our previous proposal to simplify procedures between Turkey and Iraq. See Ref C.)

Turkey to Let Iraqi Businessmen Visit w/out Travel Docs

16. (C) Ziyal said there would be a trade fair in Diyarbakir on Sept. 27-28, and that a group of Iraqi businessmen had been invited. Many of them would not have travel documents. The GOT wanted the USG to ensure the KDP let them cross the border into Turkey to attend the event. Ziyal complained that the "arbitrary attitude" of the KDP at the border crossing was problematic. The KDP realized that the situation in Iraq meant many people traveled without complete or valid documentation - in fact, many of the Iraqi Kurds came to Turkey without valid travel documents. It was wrong, he asserted, to force travelers to Turkey that the Turks were willing to accept to pay special fees or go to Baghdad to buy documents. This sort of implementation of border regulations, he said, was not helping the Kurds. Ziyal noted that some of the GC delegation members came to Turkey without valid travel documents. The Ambassador said we would help if we could, and urged Ziyal to get all the relevant information about the businessmen to us and to CPA in Baghdad (see Ref A).

Turkmen Have Contribution to Make - Work w/New Leaders

17. (C) Noting that the Kirkuk Turkmen Congress had selected a new Iraqi Turkmen leadership, that was set up without Turkey's help and was "really on their own," Ziyal complained that previously, the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) had been pushed out of any meaningful role by the US military, which saw the ITF as an extension of Turkey. As a consequence, Ziyal claimed, all Iraqi Turkmen had been excluded. He said that having the same level of representation as the Assyrians had left a bad taste in Iraqi Turkmen mouths. The new Turkmen Front leader is, Ziyal said, more capable than the previous chairman. The US should, he urged, help the new Turkmen leadership get their people into the administration to represent the needs of the Turkmen community. Ziyal (strictly protect) complained that GC member Songul Chapuk was extremely unimpressive, seemed uninformed and changed her position back and forth on key issues. (COMMENT: Although we have had no contact with Chapuk, we have heard from other sources, including Turkish ministers, that she is quite capable.)

18. (C) Deputy Undersecretary Ali Tuygan added that the

Turkmen had been punished by a low percentage of representation and by the quality of the people chosen to represent them. The Ambassador replied that we took note of the changes resulting from the Kirkuk Congress and would see over time how that change manifested itself in Iraqi politics. The objective, the Ambassador stressed, should be to move away from numbers and percentages of sectarian representation and toward a time when all peoples there think of themselves as Iraqis. After the formal meeting, in a one-on-one with the Ambassador, Ziyal admitted that Turkish policy regarding the Turkmen had been a mistake. However, Ziyal said, the Iraqi Turkmen do have a significant contribution to make. They will need help from the CPA and the Kurds to make it. The decisions at Kirkuk represented real change, Ziyal insisted, and he hoped that those changes would find resonance in the US approach to the Turkmen.

19. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN